ECLIPSE COMICS
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CHAMPIONS
DEMON OF THE SOUL!

THE CURSE OF THE HELLFIRE CROWN CHAPTER 5

ICESTAR, BASED ON THE CHARACTER CREATED BY GLENN THAIN, AND *DOCTOR ARCANE*, CREATED BY DENNIS MALLONEE, STARRING IN "THE CASTLE UNDER THE FROZEN SEA."

IF YOU'VE MISSED OUR FIRST TWO ISSUES, YOU'VE MISSED A *LOT*. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

DEMON HAS CAPTURED THE *HELLFIRE CROWN*! AND IN THE HANDS OF THAT SINISTER CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION, THE CROWN COULD POSE A THREAT TO THE ENTIRE WORLD!

FORTUNATELY, THE CROWN IS *INCOMPLETE*. THREE CRITICAL GEM FRAGMENTS--THE SOUL-SHARDS OF THE HELLFIRE CROWN--ARE MISSING. OUR HEROES ARE TRYING TO RECOVER THOSE FRAGMENTS BEFORE *DEMON* CAN LOCATE THEM.

FLARE AND GIANT ALREADY RECOVERED THE FIRST FRAGMENT.* ICESTAR AND DOCTOR ARCANE ARE GOING AFTER THE SECOND. ROSE AND THE MARKSMAN SEEK THE THIRD.

WHAT OUR HEROES REALIZE (AND WHAT DEMON *DOESN'T* KNOW) IS THAT *TIME* IS OF THE ESSENCE. MYSTIC FORCES ARE MOVING INTO ALIGNMENT, AND THE TRUE *MISTRESS* OF THE POWER OF THE HELLFIRE CROWN IS BEGINNING TO AWAKEN FROM HER DECADES-LONG SLEEP. *IF* THIS WOMAN COMES FULLY CONSCIOUS, AND *IF* SHE GAINS THE FULL POWER THAT IS HERS TO COMMAND...

...THEN THE THREAT *DEMON* POSES WILL SEEM LESS THAN A SPARK AGAINST THE FIRES OF *HER* VENGEANCE.

IF YOU'RE WEARY, ICESTAR, STOP AND REST. THERE'S NO NEED TO DRIVE YOURSELF. WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

I'M FINE, DOCTOR. WHY SHOULD I BE TIRED? IT'S ONLY BEEN *SIX HOURS* ON THE ROAD.

SOME ROAD.

*LAST ISSUE.

DENNIS MALLONEE~STORY AND SCRIPT • CHRIS MARRINEN~PENCILS • DEL BARRAS~INKS
CARRIE SPIEGLE~LETTERS • MARCUS DAVID~COLORS • SEAN DEMING~EDITOR
CAT⊕YRONWODE~EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

IT'S NOT AS IF I DON'T LIKE CANADA. I DO.

BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS FAR NORTH BEFORE.

IT'S AWFULLY BARREN COUNTRY, ISN'T IT?

YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR, MY YOUNG FRIEND.

OUR DESTINATION LIES JUST BEYOND THAT RISE.

ALL *RIGHT*, THEN.

JUST GIVE ME A MOMENT. I'LL BE FINE.

CERTAINLY.

IT WAS ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY, BUT I NEVER *TRULY* THOUGHT I WOULD EVER RETURN TO THIS PLACE, EVEN IN SPIRIT.

NO?

IT BRINGS BACK SO MANY MEMORIES...

WELL, THERE'S *STILL* A LOT YOU *HAVEN'T* TOLD ME, DOCTOR. AND IF YOU REMEMBER SOMETHING *IMPORTANT*, I HOPE YOU'LL...

HEY! WAIT FOR *ME!*

GRUMBLE. GRUMBLE.

THERE IT IS, MY YOUNG FRIEND.

THE CASTLE UNDER THE FROZEN SEA!

THERE IS WHERE OUR *TRUE* ENEMY, MALICE, MADE HER HOME!

IT'S... IT'S...

OSTENTATIOUS? YES.

BUT, THEN, THAT IS THE *NATURE* OF OUR ENEMY. SHE ALWAYS GOT THE *BEST*. SELF-GRATIFICATION WAS HER GOAL.

THAT WAS HER *WEAKNESS*, TOO.

BEING SELF-POSSESSED, AS SHE WAS, SHE NEVER UNDERSTOOD ALTRUISM, NOBILITY, OR SACRIFICE.

I AM NOT *ALTOGETHER* PROUD OF THE MANNER IN WHICH SHE WAS DEFEATED, BUT DEFEATED SHE WAS, THESE FORTY YEARS PAST.

AND HERE, IN THE CASTLE SHE RAISED AS A TRIBUTE TO *HERSELF*, WE LAID HER EMPTY, SOULLESS HUSK TO REST.

QUICKLY, ICESTAR! MY POWERS WERE NEVER STRONG, AND THEY ARE WEAKENED WITH AGE. YOU MUST *FREEZE* THE WATERS, AND LEAVE A PATHWAY OPEN FOR OUR RETREAT.

HUH?

OH! RIGHT.

GOOD THING THIS WATER'S SO COLD TO *BEGIN* WITH!

I COULD *NEVER* DO THIS TO SAN FRANCISCO BAY!

FOLLOW ME!

RIGHT! GO FOR IT!

HELLOOOO, DERE!

ANYBODY HOME?

CRRLEAK

YOU JOKE TOO EASILY, LAD.

THERE LIES THE BODY OF MELISSA D'ARQUE, WHOM I KNEW ONLY AS *DARK MALICE*.

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!

DON'T BE CONFUSED BY IT, BOY! EVIL IS SEDUCTIVE!

I REALIZE THAT, DOCTOR ARCANE.

BUT JUST TO SEE HER...

IT ALMOST MAKES THIS ENTIRE TRIP WORTHWHILE.

HMM.

SNAP

WHAT THE HECK? DID YOU DO THAT?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY SHE'S SO DANGEROUS, IF SHE'S DEAD...

OF COURSE. DARKNESS IS HER POWER. WE MAY NEED THE LIGHT.

NOT DEAD, ICESTAR! MERELY SLEEPING!

THE BODY LACKS ITS IMMORTAL SOUL!

"WHEN SHE WAS DEFEATED THESE LONG YEARS PAST, WE MADE THE DECISION--THE ORIGINAL GIANT, ONE OTHER, AND I--TO SECURE THIS BODY, TO PREVENT HER FROM TAKING ANOTHER. THE SPIRIT IS IMMORTAL, YOU SEE! AND THE BODY HAS ONLY SUCH LIFE AS THE SPIRIT HAS POWER TO GRANT!

"WE TOOK THE BLACK GEMSTONE WHICH IS THE FOCUS OF MALICE'S SOUL, AND HENCE THE FOCUS OF HER POWER, AND SPLIT IT INTO THREE! EACH SOUL-SHARD WAS TO HAVE BEEN MADE SECURE. BUT WE ERRED. THE PRECAUTIONS WE TOOK WERE NOT STRONG ENOUGH.

"TWENTY YEARS LATER, AN AGENT OF DEMON DISCOVERED THE HELLFIRE CROWN!

"HE FOUND THE THREE SOUL-SHARDS AND USED THEM IN HIS BID FOR POWER.

HE WAS BEATEN, OF COURSE, BUT THE VICTORY WAS NOT WITHOUT COST.

LET US PRAY THAT THIS TIME THE PRICE IS NOT TOO HIGH!

AMEN.

SO NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, WHAT DO WE DO?

HUH? OH, SURE!

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THAT CONFLICT TWENTY YEARS AGO, I BROUGHT MY FRAGMENT OF THE GEM-STONE HERE! AND THIS TIME THE PRECAUTIONS I TOOK WERE MORE SUBTLE! IF YOU'LL STAND ASIDE...

ONLY MALICE CAN RETRIEVE THIS FRAGMENT OF HER BLACKENED SOUL!

AND I MUST ANIMATE HER SOULLESS FORM!

HOLY CROW!

DOCTOR ARCANE? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

HMM?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I'M NOT SURE. SHOULD I BE WRONG?

NO. NO, NOT AT ALL.

GOOD. WHERE ARE WE?

AND WHO, COME TO THINK OF IT, ARE YOU?

AW, NO!

YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?

YOUNG MAN, WHILE I DO ADMIT TO SOME CONFUSION, I'M QUITE CERTAIN THAT I'M NOT JOKING.

AS I SEEM TO RECALL SAYING TO SOMEONE ELSE THIS MORNING, I DO NOT PLAY GAMES!

NOW WHAT IS IT YOU WANT FROM ME?

LISTEN! YOU'RE NOT MALICE, YOU'RE DOCTOR ARCANE!

AM I? I DON'T THINK SO...

YOU ARE! THIS IS YOUR AMULET.

IT DOES SEEM FAMILIAR...

SO WHAT DO I DO WITH IT?

HOW SHOULD I KNOW? YOU'RE THE ONE WHO INSISTED I BRING IT HERE!

THAT'S TRUE. I REMEMBER THAT.

LET ME THINK...

OVER THERE! BEHIND MY THRONE! THAT'S WHERE HE PUT IT!

GOOD.

LET'S GET THIS DONE AND OVER WITH!
OH!
SO WHERE IS IT?
HM?
OH. THERE. OF COURSE. THE AMULET FITS THERE.
I THINK I HAVE TO PUT THE AMULET IN THERE. THOUGH.
AS YOU SAY, MILADY.
HMPH.
I SUPPOSE YOU THINK YOU'RE CUTE.
NO MATTER. I'LL DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE!
NOW THAT'S VERY ODD. SOMETHING SHOULD BE HAPPENING.
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HE...
HEY!
YES!
NO!

QUICKLY, ICESTAR! TAKE THE GEM! IT SHOULD BE THERE NOW!

AH-HA! SO THIS IS WHAT THE FUSS IS ABOUT!

WHAT IS IT? SOME SORT OF OBSIDIAN?

POIT

DON'T BE SILLY, IT'S A DIAMOND—A BLACK DIAMOND, AS CORRUPT AS ITS MISTRESS'S SOUL!

SHE'S GONE NOW, BUT...

VERY BLACK.

RRRRRR

THE CASTLE'S COMING DOWN!

HOLD ON, DOC! I'LL GET US OUTTA HERE!

THUMP

CRASH

HOO-HAH! IT'S ICESTAR TO THE RESCUE AGAIN, WITH A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN HIS ARMS!

WATCH YOUR HANDS, BOY.

SORRY, DOC.

FORGOT WHO WAS WEARING IT FOR A SECOND.

UNDERSTANDABLE.

THEY DON'T MAKE EM LIKE THEY USED TO.

WHAT?

CASTLES. I MEAN NO STRUCTURAL SUPPORT!

WHAT A SHAME

IT *WAS* MAGN FICENT, WASN'T IT?

BUT MAGIC RAISED IT AND ALL THE MAGIC THAT WAS *IN* IT WAS *CHANNELED* INTO THAT LAST PROTECTIVE SPELL.

THERE'LL BE NOTHING LEFT. IT WILL *ALL* DISSOLVE. NO PRE-CIOUS STONES, NO STATUARY, NOTHING.

IT WAS *NEVER* REALLY *THERE.*

NOT REALLY THERE?

NO, OF COURSE NOT. THE ONLY REASON YOU COULD EVEN SEE IT WAS BECAUSE YOU WERE WITH ME. I DO HAVE SOME POWERS, YOU KNOW.

HERE, GIVE ME THE AMULET.

YOU DON'T WANT THE GEM?

ABSOLUTELY NOT! YOU HOLD IT.

MALICE WAS THERE, IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE! SHE WAS THERE, AND IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO BEND HER TO MY WILL!

I NEED TIME TO THINK, TO CONSIDER WHAT TO DO.

I KNOW YOU RE ATTRACTED TO HER, MY YOUNG FRIEND. ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU KEEP A REIN ON YOUR EMOTIONS. I CAN'T LEAVE THIS BODY YET, LEST SHE RETURN TO IT FULLY CONSCIOUS, AND FULLY DANGEROUS!

I MUST MAINTAIN CONTROL!

CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?

I THINK SO.

GOOD! BECAUSE, DESPITE APPEARANCES, I AM NOT DARK MALICE. I AM NOT MELISSA D'ARQUE.

I AM DOCTOR AARCANE!

AND WHILE I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO WEAR MY OWN BODY, I WILL DAMN WELL WEAR MY OWN CLOTHES!

END CHAPTER 5

INTERLUDE

LAKE TAHOE, THE CALIFORNIA SIDE.

IT'S A BIT NIPPY OUT, BUT DR. ARCANE'S GRANDDAUGHTER DONNAH HANNAH, CAME HERE FOR THE WEEKEND TO *ENJOY* A BREAK FROM CLASSES.

AND SHE'S *NOT* GOING TO LET A LATE-MORNING CHILL GET IN ENTERTAINMENT'S WAY

A *PREMONITION*, THOUGH, IS SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN.

RICHARD! STOP THE BOAT, PLEASE! SOMETHING'S WRONG.

NOT *ANOTHER* NAMELESS DREAD.

YOU DO THIS ALL THE TIME, DONNAH.

THIS IS DIFFERENT.

IS IT?

YOU'LL PHONE HOME, DISCOVER THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER SPILLED A GLASS OF MILK IN HIS LAP, AND SAY *THAT* WAS WHAT YOU MUST HAVE SENSED.

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES. GRANDFATHER DEPENDS ON ME.

WHAT ABOUT *US?*

WHEN DO *WE* GET TIME ALONE?

MURPH!

WE'VE HAD ALL *WEEKEND*, YOU ...*ANIMAL!*

NOW TAKE ME TO SHORE. I NEED TO MAKE THAT CALL.

CAN'T MAKE OUT WHAT THEY'RE SAYING, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE COMING IN.

THAT'S SOME DAME.

HOW'D A *COOT* LIKE CLINTON AVERY GET A GRANDDAUGHTER LIKE THAT?

YOU CAN HANDLE HER?

OF *COURSE* I CAN.

"THE DAY FOXBAT CAN'T HANDLE A SIMPLE KIDNAPPING'S THE DAY HE HANGS UP HIS POPGUN FOR GOOD!"

MPH!

COME ON, GRANDFATHER!

ANSWER THE PHONE.

RING-RING

I'LL GET IT.

HELLO?

IS IT ICESTAR?

ICESTAR?! I HEARD THAT!

NO! IT'S ME, YOUR ONE TRUE LOVE!

FOXBAT! LISTEN TO ME, YOU LITTLE TWERP!

NO! YOU LISTEN TO ME! AND LISTEN GOOD!

WHAT'S HE WANT?

I'M NOT SURE HE SOUNDS SCARED.

FOXBAT? SCARED?

HEY! YOU STILL THERE?

YES, GO AHEAD. WHAT IS IT?

YOU WERE RIGHT! THESE GUYS ARE CRAZY!

AND YOU'RE NOT?

NOT THE SAME WAY!

FOXBAT! SNAP IT UP OVER THERE!

ANYWAY, LOVE YA BABE! ANYTHING I CAN DO, JUST LET ME KNOW!

CLICK.

SO WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

I COULDN'T SAY.

BUT IT SOUNDED ALMOST LIKE AN OFFER TO HELP!

END INTERLUDE

CHAPTER 6 -- MARKSMAN, BASED ON THE CHARACTER CREATED BY BRUCE HARLICK -- AND ROSE, INSPIRED BY THE CHARACTER CREATED BY TOM TUMEY -- STARRING IN "A DEMON IN NEW ORLEANS!"

AND SPECIAL THANKS FOR PLOT ASSISTANCE THIS CHAPTER TO ANDREW M. ROBINSON, THE CREATOR OF DEMON.

MARKSMAN! YOU'RE INSANE! SLOW DOWN!

YOU'RE STILL GOING TOO FAST! THESE STREETS WEREN'T MADE FOR THIS SPEED.

INSANE? HAH!

SAYS THE GIRL WHO "REMEMBERS" HER PAST LIVES!

YES, BUT WE'RE LATE! AND TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE! OR SO I'VE BEEN TOLD.

VROOM VROOM

OH, I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND YOU!

WE'RE ALMOST THERE!

YOU SEEM SO LEVEL-HEADED, SO MUCH IN CONTROL...

HAH!

BUT WHEN YOU PUT YOURSELF BEHIND A WHEEL...

D'ARQUE MUSEUM

ARTIFACTS OF THE OCCULT

WE'RE HERE!

MERCIFUL HEAVEN!

SKREECH

DON'T YOU *EVER* DO THAT AGAIN!

WHY? WERE YOU SCARED?

TERRIFIED!

GOOD!

JUST BE ALERT, PLEASE.

ALWAYS

IF *DEMON* KNOWS THE LOCATION OF *ANY* OF THE THREE STONES, IT WILL BE *THIS* ONE.

OLD BORIS IS A VERY PRIVATE PERSON, BUT HIS TONGUE IS NOT ALWAYS CAREFULLY GUARDED.

I JUST HOPE WE HAVEN'T ARRIVED *TOO* LATE.

AAOOGAH

YES? THE MUSEUM IS *CLOSED*, I'M AFRAID.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, BORIS. I'M NOT HERE TO *SEE* THE MUSEUM. I PHONED EARLIER. DO YOU REMEMBER?

ROSE?

YES!

BLESS ME, IT *IS* YOU!

I APOLOGIZE FOR MY TARDINESS. I HAD TO WAIT FOR SOME FRIENDS TO RETURN, AND THEN MY FLIGHT WAS DELAYED OUT OF THE AIRPORT.

NOT AT ALL. THINK NOTHING OF IT.

OH! *THIS* IS INTERESTING.

BY ALL MEANS EXAMINE IT. TAKE IN EVERY DETAIL!

A VERY INTRICATE WORK. IT SEEMS OLDER THAN I MIGHT HAVE GUESSED.

DOES IT STRIKE YOUR FANCY? IS THAT THE PIECE YOU CAME TO PURCHASE?

NO, BORIS, I'M SORRY. ACTUALLY, DR. ARCANE SENT ME.

I SEE. ARCANE, THE MEDDLER! YOU COME FOR THE SOUL-SHARD, THEN. AND I NOTICED THAT YOU DID NOT COME ALONE!

"NO, BORIS, THIS IS IMPORTANT. WE MUST TAKE THE SOUL-SHARD BACK WITH US."

WITNESS PROTECTION AGENCY

♫♫♫

"AND YOU WOULD FORCE ME TO COMPLY?"

I'D RATHER IT DIDN'T COME TO THAT. ISN'T THERE SOME ARRANGEMENT WE CAN MAKE?

PERHAPS. PERHAPS WE CAN. HERE. COME WITH ME.

THIS IS MY MISTRESS'S SHRINE!

DR. ARCANE WAS WISE TO ENTRUST THIS FRAGMENT OF HER GEM STONE TO YOU. NO ONE ELSE WOULD GUARD IT BETTER. YOU MUST HAVE CARED FOR HER VERY MUCH.

I DID. AND I DO.

STILL, WE DO WHAT WE MUST.

THIS IS TRUE. I AM SORRY, ROSE...

BUT MY MISTRESS *AWAKENS!* AND I *MUST* FIND HER A SUITABLE *HOST* FOR HER *POWER!*

NO! MARKSMAN!

SORRY, MEN! LET'S WRAP THIS UP, QUICKLY!

I JUST HEARD A CALL FOR HELP!

YOU ARE *HELPLESS*, LITTLE GIRL!

'N *MY* HOME NOTHING *YOU* CAN DO CAN *AFFECT* ME.

BUT I... I AND MY *MISTRESS* ...WILL HAVE POWER OVER *YOU!*

EEEEEE

ROSE!

SO HELP ME, IF YOU'RE STILL HERE WHEN I GET BACK...

HOLD ON, ROSE! I'M COMING!

CRASH

ROSE?

YOU'RE TOO *LATE*, MARKSMAN! THE GIRL IS *MINE*!

I AM *DARK MALICE*! AND YOU...

YOU ARE *DEAD*!

I HATE TO DO THIS, ROSE...

BUT IT'S OBVIOUS YOU'RE NOT YOURSELF.

FOOL! I AM *MORE* THAN YOUR *ROSE* EVER WAS!

I AM *MALICE* INCARNATE! AND *YOU*, FOR ALL YOUR YEARS TO COME, ARE NO MORE THAN *MORTAL*!

MISTRESS!

EH?

LET *ME* DEAL WITH HIM! I *CRAVE* HIS *BLOOD*!

VERY WELL, THEN DO WHAT YOU *MUST*!

AAAIIIEEEEEE

IT IS DONE!

AND *WELL* DONE, MY PET!

WHAT A *SHAME* YOUR POWER IS NAUGHT BUT *ILLUSION!*

OOF!

I'M ALIVE? I'M NOT EVEN *HURT?*

NO THANKS TO *THIS* TREACHEROUS CUR!

DON'T HURT ME! PLEASE! I ONLY WANTED...

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, MARKSMAN. WE HAVE WHAT WE CAME FOR! THE OLD MAN'S TOO *PATHETIC* TO BE OF ANY FURTHER CONCERN.

OH, THANK YOU. *THANK* YOU!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. HOW MUCH OF THAT WAS *REAL?*

TOO MUCH OF IT!

MALICE WAS THERE. WE HAVE TO *LEAVE!*

OH, MARKSMAN! I DIDN'T REALIZE.. I DIDN'T *EXPECT* IT, AND SHE WAS *SO STRONG...*

IF YOU HADN'T *DISTRACTED* HER...

DEATH TO THE ENEMIES OF *DEMON!*

WHAT?

OH, *NO!*

URK!

YOU CREEP! I WARNED YOU!

SSHPLLPBLLBB

YUM

NO! GET OFF OF ME!

YOU'RE ALL CRAZY! YOU'RE FANATICS! YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU?

IF I CAN JUST...

YUMMY-YUM-YUM

BOOM

KROOW

ROSE! WHAT DID YOU...

TOO MUCH... THERE... FOR IT TO EAT! SHE'S TOO STRONG!

BUT I SURPRISED HER... THAT TIME.

DIDN'T EXPECT IT... SO SOON.

YOU TAKE IT, MARKSMAN. I DARE NOT TOUCH IT AGAIN.

IF YOU SAY SO.

SHE'S IN THERE, MARKSMAN. OR AT LEAST PART OF HER IS. AND SHE'S DEFINITELY NOT ASLEEP!

SPEAK, AGENT 12! REPORT TO ME WHAT YOU *KNOW!*

MASTER! THERE HAS INDEED BEEN ACTIVITY AT THE D'ARQUE MUSEUM IN NEW ORLEANS!

THE MARKSMAN AND ROSE WERE THERE. THE FIELD AGENTS YOU REQUESTED FROM *DEMON SOUTH* WERE ROUTED!

NOT UNEXPECTED

THE SOUTHERN BRANCH HAS ALWAYS, IN MY EXPERIENCE, BEEN COMPETENT IN PLANNING, BUT *INCOMPETENT IN EXECUTION!*

THAT WILL *CHANGE* ONCE I ASSUME *FULL* CONTROL!

WHAT *ELSE* DO YOU HAVE?

IT'S NOT WHAT *HE* HAS, PALLY! IT'S WHAT *I'VE* GOT!

FOXBAT! YOU *DARE?*

SURE I DO!

HERE'S THE *BABE* YOU ASKED FOR—AVERY'S GRANDDAUGHTER, SIGNED, *SEALED*, AND DELIVERED!

EXCELLENT!

LEAVE US, AGENT 12!

AS YOU COMMAND, MASTER.

THIS ONE WILL SERVE ME WELL! LOOK AT THE *FIRE* IN HER! I BELIEVE SHE WOULD RIP MY *HEART* OUT IF SHE COULD.

YEAH WELL, SHE'S GOT A *MOUTH* LIKE YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE!

INDEED?

THEN I MUST *HEAR* IT?

YOW!

RRRIP

UH-OH!

@#!$%¢!

AMUSING. SHE SOUNDS MORE LIKE A *SAILOR* THAN A WELL-BRED YOUNG GIRL.

AVERY HAS BEEN LAX IN TEACHING HER MANNERS.

YOU LEAVE MY GRANDFATHER *OUT* OF THIS, HORNHEAD!

I CAN HARDLY DO *THAT*, MY DEAR. *HE'S* THE REASON YOU'RE *HERE*.

AH-AH. DON'T PUSH HIM. HE'S CRAZY, YOU KNOW.

I *HEARD* THAT, FOXBAT! I'LL LET IT PASS.

PERHAPS I AM. A BIT.

BUT *YOU* ARE IN NO POSITION TO *JUDGE* ME. MY *LIFE* WILL BE *SHORT!* I HAVE BEEN *TOLD* THAT, AND I *KNOW* IT TO BE TRUE!

I WILL *ENJOY* THE BRIEF TIME THAT I *HAVE*, AND I WILL *DO* WHAT IS *NECESSARY* TO GAIN THE POWER I NEED TO *MAKE* ALL MY DREAMS COME *TRUE!*

AND *YOU*, GIRL, WILL *SERVE* ME TOWARD THAT END!

LIKE *HELL* I WILL!

LIKE *HELL* YOU *WON'T!*

OH!

HUH.

YOU SEE *MY* POWER, FOXBAT!

YOU SEE *WHY* SHE WILL *SERVE* ME WHETHER *SHE* WILL OR NO!

I AM DONNAH HANNAH NOW!

AND THE CHAMPIONS WILL UNWITTINGLY *HAND* ME THE POWER I SEEK...

BECAUSE I AM THE LOVING *GRANDDAUGHTER* OF *DOCTOR ARCANE!*

NEXT ISSUE: DR. ARCANE DELVES INTO THE GEM TO EXORCISE THE EVIL FROM THE SEPARATED SOUL-SHARDS — AND MALICE IS RELEASED AFTER 40 YEARS! ALL THIS AND MORE IN JUST THIRTY DAYS!

New World Comics in Bethany, Oklahoma, presents:

CHAMPIONS COMBAT ROOM #3

"Combat Room no. 3" © 1986 Brian Brus.

Designed by:

BRIAN BRUS

NEW WORLD COMICS
3905 Ann Arbor Avenue
Bethany, Oklahoma
Owner: BILL BATES

Hang on to your hats, pardners, 'cause once again we've chosen a combat room assembled by a die-hard group of CHAMPIONS enthusiasts, sent in through their local comic store. We've still got three rooms to go in this series, so if'n you want to see your room or character in print, have your local comic store owner or manager send it in. They'll see their name and store name in print, too! I'll be choosin' up the next rooms real soon, so don't daudle! Check out *Champions* #1 for guidelines, or write to Eclipse.

This month's combat room is set to simulate an Old West town adventure with a few surprises thrown in to keep your characters on their toes. You'll be facin' off 'gainst POWERHOUSE, who won the original competition by knockin' his last foe into the panic button on the bar (the GM ruled this okay because of the ingenuity of the move, and considerin' how much trouble Powerhouse had doin' it).

So hitch up your belts and keep your back to the wall, for you are about to face the *Champions Challenge—Western Style!*

CHAMPIONS CHALLENGE RULES

All CHAMPIONS rules from *Champions, Champions II,* and *Champions III,* and any other official supplements apply. If you don't have these, check out your local comics shop or gaming store.

The combat room stands 11 game inches (22 meters) wide by 14 game inches (28 meters) long, with a ceiling height of 3 game inches (6 meters). The room is laid out as if it were an Old Western barroom. Within the room is a bar and a stage, both ½ inch high (1 meter). A player piano with a stool sits next to the stage. On the stage stands Robot #4, a "Dance Hall Girl," and behind the bar is Robot #6, the "Bartender." Scattered around the room are eight tables and many chairs, all of them normal wood objects. At one table sits Robot #1, a "Gunslinger." Guns are mounted in one corner (N-1) and on wall (A-6). The first is an energy gun, the latter a round-missile projector. Outside the room are Robots #2, 3, and 5; these robots can enter the bar at any time during the first two rounds (roll randomly).

Objectives

1) Defeat your opponent.
2) Last at least 3 turns in the room, awake and conscious.
3) Obtain and keep safe one bottle of whisky until the end of the session. Whisky bottles may be found:
   a) One bottle each in the right hands of Robots #2, 4, and 5 (Dance Hall Girls).
   b) One in the right hand of Robot #6 (Bartender). NOTE: The Bartender won't want to give away his bottle, and will defend it!
   c) Bottles may be taken away from your opponents after they've obtained one from the robots.

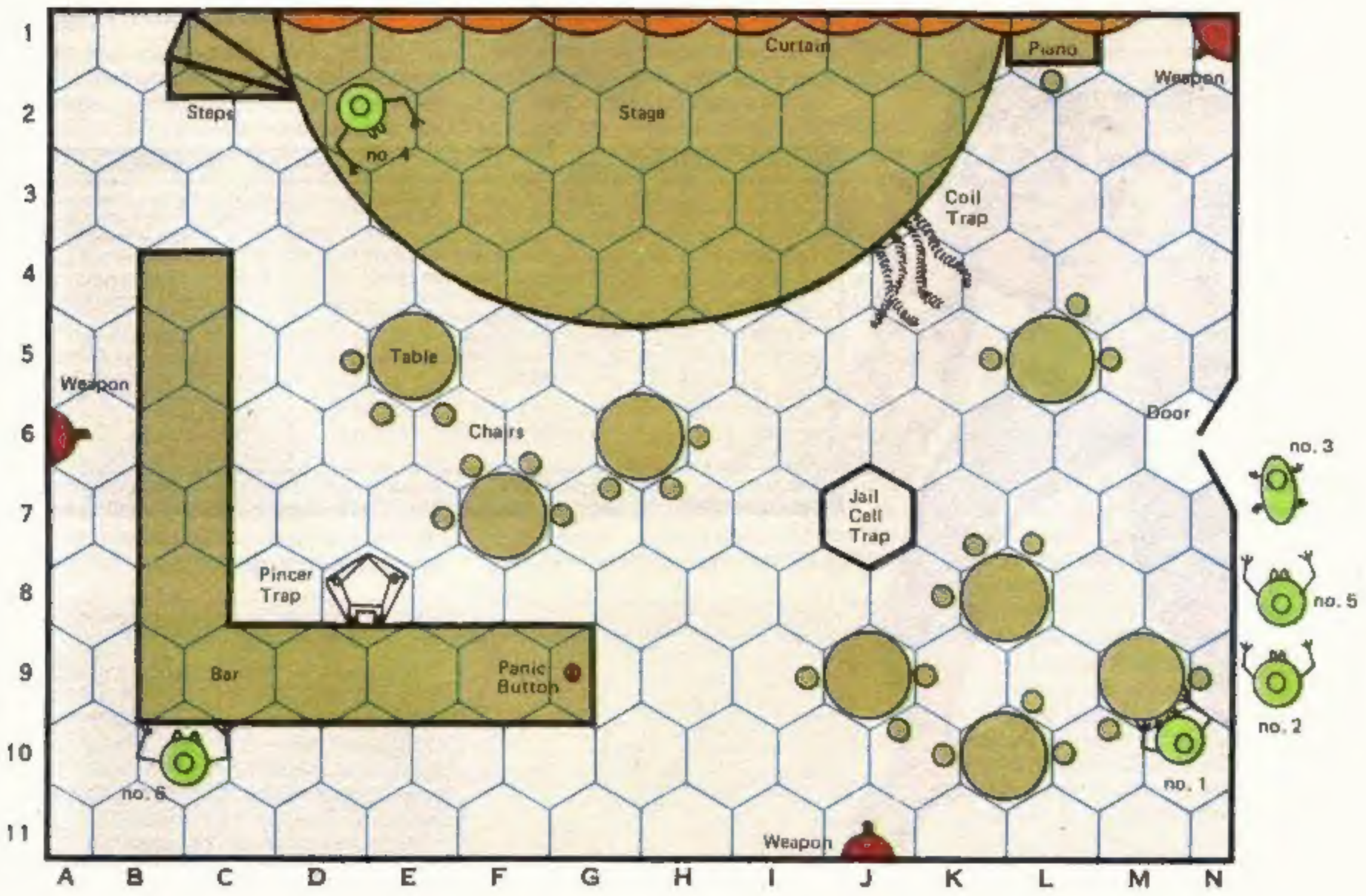
The session ends when all three objectives have been met by one of the characters, or when all three bottles are destroyed, or if both characters are unable to continue, or if time runs out. Even if objective 1 is met, if the surviving character is unable to complete objectives 2 and 3 then both characters will re-match.

Pushing the red panic button on the bar (H-9) automatically concedes defeat to your opponent. But the other character must still fulfill objectives 2 and 3 before victory is achieved.

Traps and Weapons

The bar contains three traps. Their locations remain hidden until activated. The Jail Cell Trap drops from the ceiling, the Coil Trap springs out from the stage, and the Pincer Trap extends from under the bar.

Three weapons are placed around the room. Two of them are visible (A-6 and N-1), and the third is hidden behind the wall (J-11).



COMBAT ROOM BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Lethality = 5 | *Accuracy = 4* | *Toughness = 4* | *Speed = 5* | *DEX Base = 10* | *Reaction = 5*

Robots

Movement	HTH OCV	Damage	Ranged OCV	Attack	DCV	DEF	DEX	Acts on Segments
1. Gunslinger, 8"	6	6D6	8, -1/3"	6D6 AP	6	7	24	1, 4, 7, 10, . . .
2. Dance Hall Girl, 6"	8	11D6	none		7	8	17	4, 8, 12, . . .
3. Horny Toad, 9"	–	–	8, -1/4"	9D6 Fire	8	7	25	1, 4, 7, 10, . . .
4. Dance Hall Girl, 7"	6	6D6	none		8	8	19	3, 6, 9, 12, . . .
5. Dance Hall Girl, 8"	7	7D6	none		8	6	23	3, 7, 11, . . .
6. Bartender, 7"	7	7D6	7, -1/3", explosion	6D6 stun only	7	6	20	2, 6, 10, . . .

Weapons

Location	Obvious?	Attack & Modifiers	Damage	OCV	Range mod.	DCV	DEF	DEX	Acts on Segments
N-1	Obvious	Normal sonic, no KB	8D6	6	-1/3"	5	6	19	2, 5, 8, 11, . . .
J-11	inobvious	normal electricity	7D6	7	-1/4"	7	7	21	3, 6, 9, 12, . . .
A-6	obvious	physical, + 1D6 KB	9D6	7	-1/3"	6	8	22	1, 5, 9, . . .

Traps

Location	Attack Mechanism	Does Damage, Type	Escape	Secondary	Powers to Circumvent
J-4	grab	each phase, 5D6 physical	DEX	DEX	Teleport (affects desolids)
J-7	surround	escape try, 6D6 electric	DEX	INT	teleport, desolid, security systems
D-8	grab	none	DEX	none	shrinking (affects desolids)

POWERHOUSE *Created by and ©1986 John Emmons*

VAL	CHAR	Cost	Cost	Powers	END	100 + Disadvantages	
22	STR	12	96	2D6 Power Transfer, STR-to-STR		45	x1½ Body, x2 Stun vs. energy killing attacks
20	DEX	30		w/6-segment delay, zero END,			
22	CON	24		invisible effect, always on		10	x1½ Stun vs. poisons
12	BODY	4	50	3D6 Power Transfer, END-to-END		15	Enjoys being very strong
12	INT	2		w/4-segment delay, zero END,		15	But is afraid of absorbing too much energy from his opponents
10	EGO	0		invisible effect, always on			
16	PRE	6	15	½ Damage Resistance		5	Code against killing
10	COM	0	10	12 pts Ego Defense		35	Hunted ≤11 by Control
14	PD	10	5	5 pts Power Defense		20	Hunted ≤8 by the CIA
14	ED	10	10	+5" Running		15	Competent ONPC ≤14 (girlfriend)
5	SPD	20				15	Secret Identity
9	REC	0				20	Experience spent
44	END	0					
34	STUN	0					

CHAR Cost 118 + 186 Power Cost = Total Cost 304 = Disadvantage Total

THE ORIGIN OF POWERHOUSE

CONTROL, a huge organization with their hands into many areas of government, indust, and the Mafia, took an unwilling Barry Burris and injected him with an experimental drug. The resultant chemical reaction transformed Burris into Powerhouse, who now uses his abilities as a vigilante super-hero.

His girlfriend, it should be noted, has 15 pts of Power Defense that protects her from Powerhouse's always-on attacks.

For your CHAMPIONS campaign . . .

GIANT

inspired by the character created by Steve Peterson

VAL	CHAR	Cost	Cost		Powers	END	100	+ Disadvantages
45	STR	25	10		Growth, always on in hero form		10	2D6 Unluck
17	DEX	19	27		Multi-Power—60-pt pool, hero		5	1D6 Stun after 1 hour in
15	CON	8			form only, x8 End Battery, OAF			hero form
17	BODY	8	3	u	+6 levels Growth	12	10	Overriding sense of duty
18	INT	8	3	u	8D6 Electrical Damage Aura	12	25	Hunted ≤11 by Malice
14	EGO	8	13		Body Armor (8,8), OIF, ≤14		15	Secret Identity
25	PRE	8	16		2 pts Regeneration-hero form only		15	Normal DNPC ≤11 (wife)
16	COM	3	10		+2 in HTH Combat		15	Incomp. DNPC ≤8 (son)
10	PD	1	10		2D6 Luck		13	Experience Spent
10	ED	5	2		Instant Change, OAF (harness)			
4	SPD	13						
11	REC	0						
50	END	8						
43	STUN	0						
CHAR Cost*		114	+ 94		Power Cost	=	Total Cost 208	= Disadvantage Total

Real Name: James William Jensen
Place of birth: Oakland, California
Marital status: Married
Known relatives: Wife (Joyce Jensen), son (Billy Jensen)
Height: 6'0" (as Jim Jensen); 6'6" (as Giant)
Weight: 200 lbs. (as Jim Jensen); 280 lbs. (as Giant)
Age: 28
Eyes: Brown
Hair: Brown

* The cost of Giant's characteristics is computed by giving him the extra characteristics that derive from the one level of Growth he always has on in hero form, and factoring out the cost of the characteristics he retains when he reverts to being Jim Jensen. Jim's stats are as follows: STR 13; DEX 14; CON 10; BODY 10; INT 16; EGO 14; PRE 10; COM 16; PD 4; ED 3; SPD 4; REC 5; END 20; STUN 22.

Physical attributes: Even before he dons the harness of Giant, Jim Jensen is a large, powerfully built man. But when he uses his harness to *become* Giant, Jim gains enormous stature, and the power of a titan!

Powers: At his normal size, Giant is enormously strong. He is also capable of *increasing* his size and strength geometrically for brief periods of time. Through his mystic harness, he can summon the power of Zeus, and generate electrical energy, but the effort leaves him physically drained. Giant also has the ability to heal damage done to his body, and will recover from anything short of death in a relatively brief time.

Weaknesses: Giant's mystic harness grants him the stature of a titan and some of the power of Zeus, but those powers were not meant to course through a mortal frame. If Jim were to remain as Giant for too long a time, his body would slowly weaken, and eventually perish.

Origin: Jim Jensen is the *second* man to wear the harness of Giant. His predecessor first became Giant in the early 1930's, and wore the harness off and on until his death in the early 1960's. Some years ago, when Jim learned that his girlfriend, Joyce, was the daughter of the original Giant, he convinced her to allow *him* to don her father's harness and wield power in the service of mankind. Most people, however, don't realize that there have been two different Giants, and assume that the contemporary Giant is the same hero who's been around for the last fifty years. And, in some sense at least, that assumption is correct. When Jim Jensen became Giant, he not only gained most of his predecessor's abilities, he also gained access to whatever *knowledge* the original Giant possessed.

Background: As this series begins, Jim Jensen has gone into semi-retirement. He has married and has settled down with his wife to raise a family. But he has agreed to help his friends when the need arises, and so has occasionally gone back into action, usually at the behest of the Marksman or Doctor Arcane.

Game Mechanics: If you play Giant in your campaign, remember that he uses his extra powers of growth and electricity only sparingly. It takes a long time for those abilities to renew themselves once they're used (one END point returns to the Endurance battery every ten minutes).

Note that once Jim Jensen *becomes* Giant, he doesn't need his harness to *remain* Giant, though he does require it to wield his extra powers of growth and electricity. Also, were the harness to be taken from him, he would be *trapped* as Giant, and could not revert to his Jim Jensen identity. Further (and this is a *very* important point should a super-villain manage to steal Giant's harness in your Champions campaign), so long as Jim Jensen exists *as* Giant, the harness cannot be used by anyone else to *become* Giant. In many respects, Giant is an entity *separate* from the person who acts as his host; he cannot occupy two different host bodies at the same time.

GIANT [a.k.a. Jim Jensen] — Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12

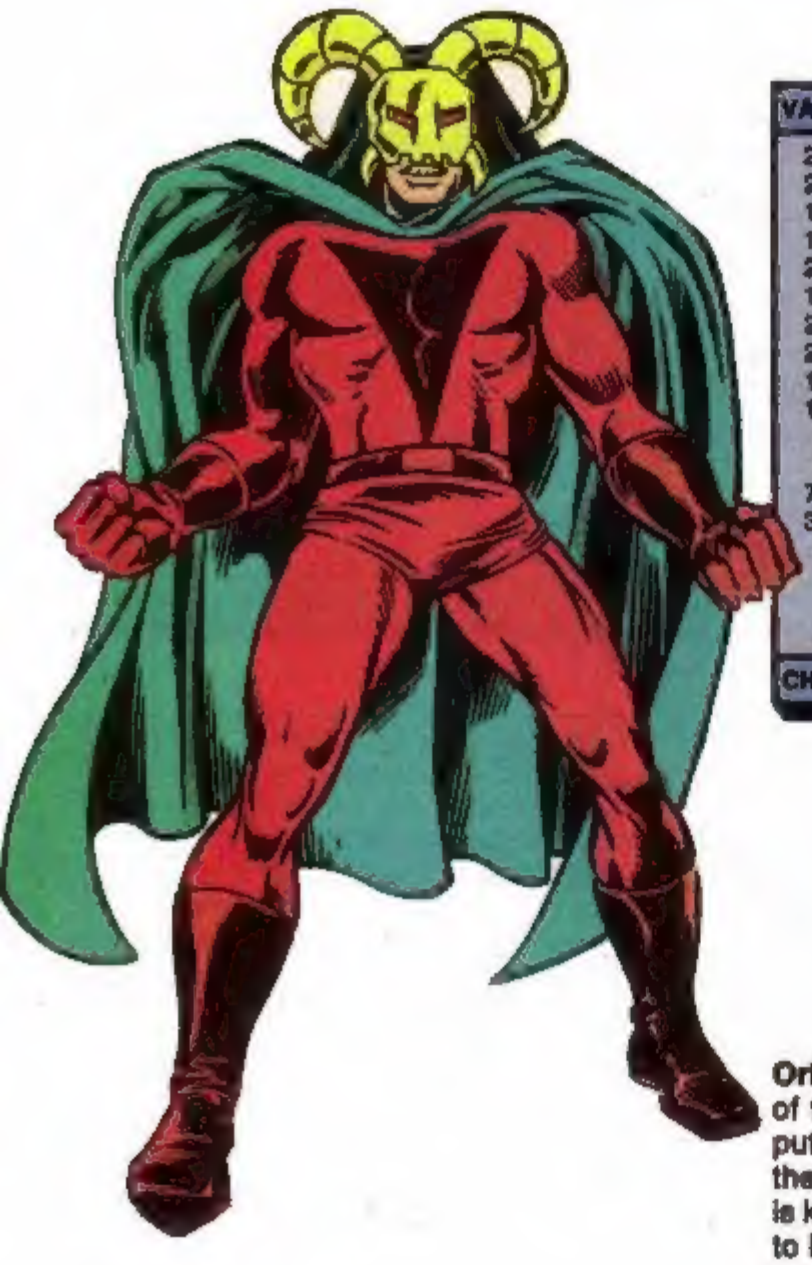
OCV:	6	PD:	18	PER Roll:	13	Running:	8"
DCV:	6	rPD:	8	DEX Roll:	12	Climbing:	2"
ECV:	5	ED:	18	INT Roll:	13	Swimming:	2"
		rED:	8	EGO Roll:	12		
+2 levels in HTH Combat				Note that Giant's body armor only works on a 14 or less, and that he has 2 pts of Regeneration			

END: 50	STUN: 43	BODY: 17

For your CHAMPIONS campaign . . .

The DEMON Master

Inspired by a character created by Andrew M. Robinson



VAL	CHAR	Cost	Cost	Powers	END	100 + Disadvantages
25	STR	15	45	30-pt Magic power pool		10 2D6 Unluck
21	DEX	33	15	Magic Skill ≤18		15 3D6 Stun vs intense light
18	CON	16	67	20D6 Telepathy, only when in	20	40 x2 Stun, x2 Body vs light-based attacks
13	BODY	6		physical contact w/victim		
20	INT	10	35	Shape-Shift, zero Endurance	0	20 Arrogant, totally self-centered
18	EGO	16	5	Disguise ≤13		
20	PRE	10	5	Acting Skill ≤13		20 Enjoys causing death and destruction (irr)
20	COM	5	10	Stealth ≤13		
15	PD	10	6	Computer Programming ≤13		8 Wants to have Flare as his consort (irr)
16	ED	11	5	Security Systems ≤13		
6	SPD	29	4	Speaks perfect German w/literacy		8 Obsessed with power
9	REC	0	15	+3 levels in HTH combat		3 Naive (irr)
70	END	17	10	+1 general level		25 Hunted ≤8 by PRIMUS
35	STUN	0	16	50% Damage Resistance		25 Hunted ≤8 by the Champions
			15	3D6 Luck		10 Monitored ≤8 by the DEMON high command
						145 Villain Bonus
CHAR Cost		178 +	251	Power Cost =	Total Cost	429 = Disadvantage Total

Real Name: Unknown
Place of birth: Unknown
Marital status: Single
Known relatives: None
Height: Variable; usually around 6'2"
Weight: Variable, usually around 180 lbs.
Age: Unknown
Eyes: Variable, usually blue
Hair: Variable, usually blond

Origin: Little is known about the origins of the man who has become the undisputed Master of DEMON's operations in the western half of the United States. It is known that he was originally presented to DEMON's High Command as the ultimate espionage agent, capable of assuming any guise, and of rooting out any captive's darkest secrets. For a time, under the code-name "Chameleon," he served DEMONFLUX, the espionage arm of the DEMON organization. But he was not content to leave it at that, and over the course of the months that followed he rose swiftly in the ranks, using his special powers to achieve his own ends, until even the High Command had grown to fear him.

Powers: There are two facets to the Demonmaster's natural abilities of mimicry. The first is his ability to alter the size and shape of his body; the second is the mental link he can create when he touches his victim's flesh. Not only can the Demonmaster assume the proper *form* when he impersonates someone, he can also tap into his victim's *mind*.

Weaknesses: It is well known among members of DEMON that the Demonmaster is sensitive to light, but not even they realize just *how* sensitive he is. The Demonmaster prefers to keep things dimly lit as much as possible, and doesn't like going out in the daylight (though he will if he has to). It isn't that bright light will hurt him (though *intense* light will), rather it causes him a certain amount of discomfort.

Talents: The Demonmaster's background is in espionage, and he does have specific skills appropriate to his previous position as an agent of DEMONFLUX. In addition, he has made it a point to learn how to use the mystic powers at DEMON's command, and has become highly skilled in those arts. He knows more magic than most Morbanes, though he is not as knowledgeable as Doctor Arcane.

Gaming Notes: If you use the Demonmaster in your campaign, try to think of him as an ambitious, selfish little boy who never had to grow up. The Demonmaster thinks he now has the power to get everything he ever wanted for himself, and he's intent on *using* that power.

Note that the Demonmaster's magic power pool could be used in conjunction with his shape-shifting ability to allow him not only to imitate form, but function. If, for example, he were to take the form of a man with wings, it's conceivable that he could use his magic to fly. He *cannot*, however, fully duplicate powers with active points greater than the 30 points in his magic pool.

A special game effect of the Demonmaster's telepathic ability is that it can, at the game-master's discretion, render a victim unconscious for an extended period of time. This effect should not often come into play in combat situations; use it only for *dramatic* effect whenever the Demonmaster has had sufficient time to deal with a prisoner.

THE DEMON MASTER						Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
OCV:	7	PD:	15	PER Roll:	13	Running: 6"
DCV:	7	rPD:	8	DEX Roll:	13	Jumping: 5"
ECV:	6	ED:	15	INT Roll:	13	Swimming: 2"
		rED:	8	EGO Roll:	13	
				Note that the Demonmaster also has skill levels he can apply in hand-to-hand combat		
END: 70			STUN: 35		BODY: 13	